



email: admin@portobello.edin.sch.uk
Phone: 0131 6692324



Portobello High School

Snippets



European Day of Languages 2026

Modern Languages

Portobello HS recently celebrated the European Day of Languages with a whole week of activities. These included a language-themed music quiz, a British Sign Language 'sign of the day' challenge and a BSL pop-up stall for pupils (and staff) to learn how to spell their name in BSL. At the end of the week, the Modern Languages team took a fantastic group of S2 pupils to the Institut Francais in Edinburgh on Friday 25th September 2026. Pupils explored four "corners" of Europe: Czechia, Poland, Spain and Romania, enjoying an interactive encounter in each of the different languages. They even got to take away some free goodies! A huge well done to all those involved in our celebration events for European Day of Languages.

THE WEEK

- 1 Senior reports S4-6 are due out this week and can be accessed via the pupil tracking system. If you need any help in accessing the online report then please call our school office. Full details will be emailed prior to the reports going live.
- 2 Edinburgh College have opened applications for college courses starting in January 2027 - If your young person is interested in finding out more about college, would like help applying or is thinking of leaving school at Christmas, they can get support from the career advisers in F35
- 3 The S4 prelims begin at the start of December and over the coming weeks young people will be provided with their prelim timetable including any support arrangements required.
- 4 The S4 parents evening is next Tuesday. Full details will be emailed to all parents/carers.
- 5 School uniform is available to purchase online <https://portobellohighschool.imagescotland.com/> Plain black hoodies or sweatshirts can also be purchased from various local retailers.

Dates for the diary

October
28th - Senior Phase reports issued
29th - S1/6 Halloween Disco

November
3rd - S4 Parents Evening
3rd - Prelim Navigator launch for S4 pupil - study skills workshops
5th - Cabaret Concert - see details inside

Key dates in the calendar on last page of this newsletter. Also, our new web calendar will be available on our website soon.

Developing the Young Workforce update

Latest DYW update available here



Inclusion

Inclusion at Portobello High School - message from the Headteacher

An increasing number of parents and carers are asking how we will meet their child's additional support needs and help them achieve at Portobello High School. We understand the anxiety behind these questions, families want to know that their child will be understood, supported and given every opportunity to succeed. We take these concerns seriously. Our commitment is to work with you and your child to understand their strengths and needs, identify appropriate support and review how well it is working. While we cannot promise that every challenge will be resolved immediately, we will listen, respond and adapt our approaches as your child's needs change. Our commitment to inclusion at Portobello High School is unwavering. With 48% of our young people identified as having an additional support need, we have invested significantly in expanding our support provision, curriculum choices and staff training to give every learner the best possible chance of success.

Our young people have a broad range of needs, including support with English as an additional language, dyslexia, autism, ADHD, developmental coordination disorder, speech and language difficulties, anxiety and physical disabilities. These needs can overlap, and no diagnosis or description tells us everything about an individual child. Young people with similar ASN profiles may require very different approaches, and the support that works well at one stage may need to change at another. As research develops and our understanding of neurodiversity deepens, we must continue to learn, recognise emerging needs and adapt our practice.

We work closely with staff to identify priorities for professional learning, strengthen inclusive teaching and develop approaches that support learning, wellbeing and engagement. We are proud of the significant improvements in attainment and achievement for our learners with ASN.

- Our S4 and S5 learners with ASN achieve qualification outcomes averaging more than 9 and 10 percentage points respectively above national comparators for young people with ASN.
- In 2026, every young person with ASN in S4 continued into S5—a 100% stay-on rate, compared with 81% average in 2022, 2023 and 2024. These are encouraging indicators of the support and opportunities available through our expanded provision and curriculum, and our commitment to GIRFEC (getting it right for every child)
- Young people with ASN participate in wider achievement opportunities including DofE, sport and expressive arts, within the curriculum and through extracurricular activities, at similar rates to their peers. This is also reflected in attendance at after-school revision classes and study support sessions.

We also recognise that inclusion means more than qualifications, it means feeling understood, valued and able to participate fully in school life.

Through the development of our Classroom Charter, our commitment is to listen, review and respond, keeping our support flexible as young people's needs change. We achieve the best outcomes through collaboration between staff, young people and families, combining professional knowledge with parents' and carers' understanding of their child. Thank you for your continued partnership as we work together to help every young person achieve and thrive.

G McDowall - HT

Additional Support Needs sessions

Family Engagement Meetings

The dates for our online family engagement meetings for families of young people with additional support needs are as follows:

Weds 2nd December 5.15-6.15

Thursday 18th March 5.15-6.15

Tuesday 8th June 5.15-6.15

We look forward to collaborating with families during these meetings to strengthen our inclusion work.

More details of the Dec meeting will be shared in due course.

ASN positive transitions event

On Wednesday 30 September, Portobello High School and DYW welcomed families, young people, staff and partner organisations to explore opportunities for young people with additional support needs preparing to leave school.

Partners shared information on employment, transition planning, social connections and independent living. Edinburgh College outlined progression pathways, while the City of Edinburgh Council's Local Area Coordination team explained how they help young people build independence. Thank you to all our partners and everyone who attended for making this such an informative and supportive evening.

Dyslexia support

Thank you to everyone who attended our S1 Dyslexia Support Evening. These sessions continue to be warmly received, bringing young people, families and staff together to share experiences and explore ways to address the challenges learners with dyslexia can face in the classroom.

We are committed to helping all young people develop literacy skills for life. A two-hour dyslexia information session for staff was planned for our in-service day after the October holidays. Following the disruption that morning, this has been moved to a future whole-staff training day to ensure this important professional learning takes place.



Kaleidoscope

THURSDAY AFTER-SCHOOL GROUP
OPEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE CITY WIDE

AGED 12-16

DO YOU HAVE AN AUTISM DIAGNOSIS OR
SELF-IDENTIFY AS BEING AUTISTIC?

DO YOU WANT TO
BUILD YOUR
CONFIDENCE?

LEARN NEW
SKILLS?

MEET LIKE-
MINDED
PEOPLE?



S4 Prelims and supporting our young people

S4 Navigator Programme

The S4 Navigator Programme launches on Tuesday with a series of workshops designed to support pupils in the run-up to prelims. Sessions will focus on study skills, wellbeing, and effective preparation for assessments. All S4 pupils will also receive the November study support timetable and key information to help them get ready for both in-class assessments and prelim exams.

As a school, we provide assessment arrangements to allow young people with additional support needs to access assessments and demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without compromising the integrity of qualifications. We are well under way in ensuring that all young people with additional support needs will have the most appropriate assessment arrangements in place.

At this stage, we have:

- Identified those young people who need assessment arrangements
- Used staff expertise across the school to ensure the assessment arrangements provided will be the most appropriate to meet the young person's need(s)
- Allocated time for Support Team staff to meet with each young person in S4 identified as requiring assessment arrangements (meetings throughout November).

Support for Young People:

- Every young person in S4 who will require assessment arrangements will meet with a member of our Support Team to discuss the arrangements available to them.
- We will also offer support to young people to ensure they are comfortable and confident with the arrangements in place.

Parent/Carer Information:

- Assessment arrangements will be communicated with parents/carers to confirm that the assessment arrangements offered are the most appropriate in supporting the young person for their assessments.
- Further to this, please send any questions to admin@portobello.edin.sch.uk and this will be directed to the most appropriate member of staff.
- More information about Assessment Arrangements at Portobello HS will be issued via email

Natasha Foundation

Our buddy walk was incredibly successful! We did it on 1st October, in the afternoon, along the Portobello Promenade. Over 150, pupils, teachers and members of the community joined us for the walk, most sporting purple!! I made shortbread for the halfway point which was free from the top 14 allergens and prepared in a safe environment so that everyone was able to eat it.

I also started a justgiving to sponsor the walk, and so far we've made £725. More than that, it was a school wide event that everyone was aware of. We have 1,600 people in our school, think about how many people I've educated as a result.

I organised it all by myself, with no coordinating help, but it really takes an army. Some S3s made signs, teachers spoke to pupils and we handed out the spare shortbread to the local community. We had ribbons for people to do creative stuff with, such as tying them in their hair, on their shoes or on their bag! Martha Evans S6



Careers in Sport

A group of 36 S5/6 pupils with an interest in Sport, PE and Dance had the fantastic opportunity to attend a careers and pathways event at Oriam, organised by Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). During the visit, pupils enjoyed an exclusive tour of Oriam, Scotland's National Performance Centre, including areas used by Heart of Midlothian Football Club and Scottish Rugby for training and performance.

Pupils also had the opportunity to speak directly with a wide range of organisations and employers from across the Sport, PE and Performing Arts industries. They visited various stalls, including Edinburgh Leisure, Tennis Scotland, Nardones Performing Arts Academy and many more, finding out about potential careers, further education and performance opportunities and pathways within the industries they are passionate about.

It was a fantastic opportunity for our S5/6 pupils to explore the wide range of careers available within Sport, PE and Dance, meet professionals working in these sectors and gain valuable insight into their potential next steps beyond school.

A huge thank you to DYW, Oriam and all of the organisations involved for providing such an inspiring and valuable experience for our pupils!

Outstanding Achievement in Modern Languages

On 1st October 2026, we were visited by Lorna Milne (President of the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland) to award a prize to former pupil Rhona Mylne. Rhona graduated from S6 in June 2026 and although she achieved excellent results across all her subjects, she has been recognised for Advanced Higher French in particular. Rhona achieved 95% in the course, which was the highest result of anyone in Scotland! We are so delighted by this news, and we wish Rhona the very best as she begins her course in French & Linguistics at the University of Oxford.



Climbing success



Emily Baxter (1C1) had a great weekend at the finals of the Scottish Youth Climbing Series, winning both the Bouldering and Rope Climbing Events at EICA, Ratho and overall 1st place in the Under 13 Female series, earning her a place to represent Scotland in the British Grand Final. Hugely well deserved for all her hard work and massive effort over the year.

Sustainability



BULB PLANTING PROJECT

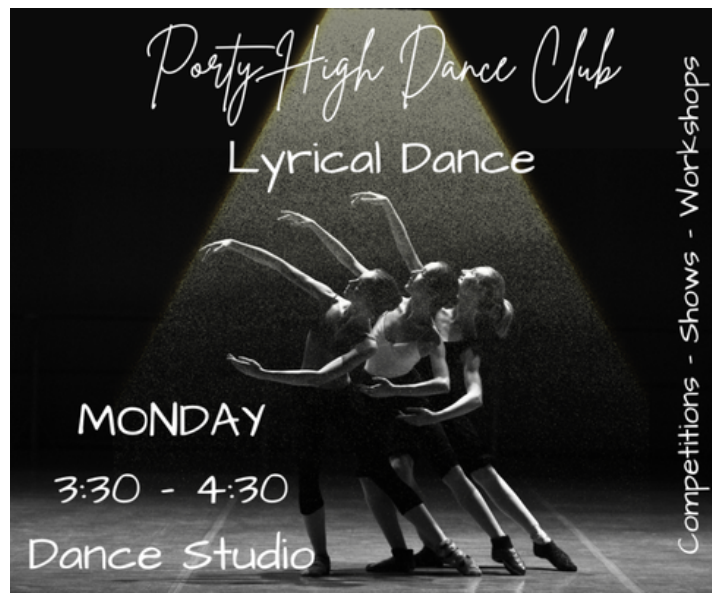
Our amazing **One Planet Porty** eco club have been working with Parsons Green P3/4/7 classes to learn about biodiversity, ecosystems and the importance of pollinators. On Monday we had the P7 class up doing our web of life workshop where they became part of Scotland's ecosystem and faced climate change to understand how climate impacts ripple through the layers of the food chain.



After the holidays we will be planting a range of early blooming bulbs in our community to support pollinator populations in our local area. This will in turn support local food production, increase biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration.



Dance Club



Porty High Dance Club
Lyrical Dance

MONDAY
3:30 - 4:30
Dance Studio

Competitions - Shows - Workshops

S2 Activity Day

Our S2 Activity Day before the October holidays was a great event, enjoyed by all. These activity days are now an annual fixture, warmly received by families and offering young people a low-cost day out with friends. A huge thank you to our Parent Council, whose fundraising helps subsidise the activities and keeps them affordable for families.

Staffing update

Congratulations to Mr Collinson - Maths, who will be leaving us to take up a new post at Boroughmuir High School. Mr McDowall will be picking up Mr Collinson's timetable as we look to appoint a replacement teacher.

College update

Edinburgh College have opened applications for college courses starting in January 2027 - January Courses | Edinburgh College . If your young person is interested in finding out more about college, would like help applying or is thinking of leaving school at Christmas, they can get support from the career advisers in F35 or get in touch via email.

Email us at –
Lisa.walker2@sds.co.uk
Aneta.Cairney@sds.co.uk

Karate success

Congratulations go to an impressive number of PHS students who were selected to represent Scotland at the 51st Federation of European Wado Kai Karate Championships in Cyprus last weekend. Skye Smith (S1) Layla Cameron (S1), Zachary Winter (S1) Lily Burton (S2) Ben Walker (S2) Olivia Archibald (S2) Drew Riddell (S3) George Burnham (S4) & Julia Duff (S5) Against tough competition with athletes from across fifteen nations Scotland's performances were outstanding. Special congratulations to Zachary & Drew; silver medallists and Ben, George & Julia; gold medallists & European Champions!

Raffle prizes needed

The Parent Council will be running an online Christmas Raffle again this year as a fundraiser for the school, and are looking for prizes. Do you work somewhere that could offer a prize or have a product, service or unwanted gift that you could donate? We usually have a variety of prizes of differing values to try to appeal to as many people as possible. If you can help, please contact Portyhighparents@gmail.com and we can arrange to collect it. We also host in school raffles at events - eg school concerts - so need prizes throughout the year. Thanks.

Porty Prom consultation - Katie and Emma S6

WE NEED YOUR INPUT! What makes Porty Porty? Our high school is partnering with the City of Edinburgh Council to inform the plans for the ongoing Thriving Green Spaces Project which sees £2.2 million of the new tourist tax money earmarked to upgrade our prom. Our S6 leaders are looking for you to fill in this short survey to help us shape the future of the promenade and make it a space for everyone.

Portobello Promenades spirit survey



Duke of Edinburgh

Silver DofE



Silver DofE at Portobello High School 2025-6

74 completed expeditions

889 hours of volunteering

94 kilometres walked

1752 metres elevation climbed

infinite... Friendships made

Resilience gained

Laughs shared

Confidence found

Skills learned

Experiences unlocked

The infographic features a central mountain graphic with various outdoor activity icons: a mountain peak, a campfire, a tent, a compass, and a pair of hiking boots.



Silver DofE at Portobello High School 2025-6

This year we had 72 amazing young people complete expeditions in the Pentland Hills and Scottish Borders. Journeying in their qualifier they faced torrential downpours, scorching afternoon sun and blustery ridge walking. Despite the challenges there were countless examples of resilience, determination and team work.

It was heart warming to see so many young people stepping out of their comfort zones and facing new challenges. Many participants said they felt more confident in outdoor environments and were now keen to create adventures of their own. They also said the biggest learning lesson was that they realised they are far more capable of pushing themselves than they had before. Everyone faced difficult decisions and conditions head on to create their own empowering expeditions.

The collage includes several photographs of students on expeditions: a group standing on a ridge, a group walking through a field, a group sitting around a campfire, and a group standing in a field. It also features a compass icon and a book icon labeled 'CAMPING'.

Portobello High School has the largest Duke of Edinburgh's Award provision in Edinburgh, offering Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. We are immensely proud that these opportunities reach young people from a broad range of backgrounds, helping them build confidence, resilience, friendships and skills for life.

Preparing for expeditions can bring understandable anxiety for parents and carers, and reassuring families is a significant part of our team's work. Our one-night S2 camping experience helps young people develop independence while giving parents greater confidence about longer expeditions.

Behind every expedition are many hours of preparation, organising kit loans, tidying equipment and coordinating arrangements, much of which takes place in staff's own time. Some staff also spend 20 nights away from their own families throughout May and June. This extraordinary commitment and personal sacrifice deserve our heartfelt thanks, alongside our appreciation for the families who support them.

If you would like to support our DofE programme in any way, please get in touch through the school office. Your support will help us continue to make these valuable experiences accessible to young people across our school community.

Extra Curricular Clubs and Activities

Extra Curricular Clubs

Day	Activity	Pupils	Time	Venue	Staff Member
Monday	Card Games Club	S1-6	13:05 - 13:40	F21	Mrs Malley
	Senior & Staff Choir	S4-6	13:05 - 13:40	Small Hall	Mr Cuthbertson
	Eco Club (One Planet Party)	S1-6	13:05-13:40	G19	Mrs Mcdonald
	Bronze Duke of Edinburgh	S3	15:30-16:30 every second week	Language corridor	Mrs Taylor, Mrs Munro and Miss Dunn
	Silver Duke of Edinburgh	S4/5	15:30-16:30 every second week	G13/G19	Mrs Mcdonald
Tuesday	Comic Book Club	S1-6	13:05 - 13:40	G38	Mr Lecomte
	String Orchestra	S1-S6	13:05 - 13:40	Dance Studio	Mr Horvath
	Portonova Folk Band	S1-6	15:30-16:30	Small Hall	Mr Horvath
	Bronze Duke of Edinburgh	S3	15:30-16:30 every second week	G13/G19	Ms McCutcheon
	Warhammer Club	S1-3	15:30-16:30	G35	Bruce Alighieri
	School Show	S1-6	15:30-17:00	Main School Hall/ Studio Dance	Ms Beynon/Ms Grandison
Wednesday	Junior Choir	S1-3	13:05-13:40	LG84	Mr Cuthbertson
	Jazz Band	S1-6	13:05-13:40	Main School Hall	Mr Barker
	Bronze Duke of Edinburgh	S3	15:30-16:30 every second week	Maths	Mr Murphy
	Silver Duke of Edinburgh	S4/5	15:30-16:30 every second week	G19	Mrs Mcdonald
	Craft Club	S1-S6	13:05-13:40	F06	Miss Faust
	Movie Club	S1-6	13:05-13:40	G48	Mrs Kustra
	Senior Wind Ensemble	S4-6	15:30-16:30	Main School Hall	Mr Barker/Mrs Barker
Thursday	Calligraphy Club	S1-6	13:05-13:40	F20	Ms Rezende
	Junior Wind Band	S1-3	13:05-13:40	Main School Hall	Mrs Barker
	Manga Club	S1-6	13:05-13:40	G43	Ms Wards
	Chess Club	S1-6	13:05-13:40	LG28	Mr Richardson
	Guitar Ensemble	S1-6	15:30-16:30	Main School Hall	Mr Knowles
	Darts Club	S1-6	15:30-16:30	G16	Mr Swan
Friday	Percussion Ensemble	S1-6	12:15-13:00	LG79	Ms Morrison

Extra Curricular Sports Programme

Sport programme

Extra-Curricular Sport & Activity Programme 2026/27 Launched

The programme is now live and can be booked by scanning the **QR Code** below. Hard copies of the programme

are available from the PE Department. Pupils can book on to as many clubs as they want and are completely **free of charge**!

All clubs begin the week beginning **31st August**.



Portobello High School Extra-Curricular Programme 2026 - 2027



Day	Activity	Pupils	Time	Venue
Monday	Dance – Open Dance Practice	S1 - 6	1.10 – 1.40	Studio
	Pickleball	S1 – 6	1.10 – 1.40	Games Hall
	Lacrosse	S1 – 6	1.10 – 1.40	Pitch 2
	Dance – Lyrical Competition Class	S1 - 6	3.30 – 4.30	Studio
	Netball	S1-3	3.30 – 4.30	Games Hall
	Netball	S4-6	4.30 – 5.30	Games Hall
Tuesday	Club Swimming*	S1 – 6	07.00 – 08.00	Pool
	Running Club	S1 - 6	07.15 – 08.00	PE Dept
	Basketball	S1 Girls	3.30 – 4.30	Gym Hall
	Dance – Commercial Competition Class	S1 - 6	3.30 – 4.30	Studio
	Judo	S1 - 6	3.30 – 4.15	Gym Hall
	Swimming	S1-3	3.30 – 4.30	Pool
	Volleyball	S1 6	3.30 4.30	Games Hall
Wednesday	Well-Being Club	S1-6	07.15 – 08.00	PE Dept
	Girls Rugby	S1-6	3.30 – 4.30	Rugby Pitch
	Dance – Open Performance Class	S1 - 6	3.30 – 4.30	Studio
	Basketball	S1 Boys	3.30 – 4.30	Games Hall
	Cycle Club	S1 - 6	3.30 – 5.00	Meet in PE
	Basketball	S2-3 Girls	4.30 – 5.30	Games Hall
Thursday	Darts Club	S1 – 6	1.10 – 1.40	G16
	Badminton	S1-6	1.10 – 1.40	Games Hall
	Girls Football	S1 – 3	3.30 – 4.30	3G Pitch
	Spin Cycling	S1-6	3.30 – 4.15	Studio
	Badminton	S1 – 6	3.30 – 4.30	Games Hall
	Karate	S1 - 6	3.30 – 4.30	Gym Hall
Friday	Club Swimming*	S1-6	07.00 – 08.00	Pool
	Basketball	S4-6 Girls	12.30 – 1.30	Games Hall
	Basketball	S2 -3 Boys	1.30 – 2.30	Games Hall
	Rugby	S1 - 2	2.00 – 3.30	3G Pitch
	Basketball	S4 – 6 Boys	2.30 – 3.30	Games Hall



Scan QR Code to Sign Up

Cabaret Concert

Our senior pupils have been working hard to prepare a fantastic programme of music for the evening showcasing a wide range of talents through rock and folk bands (including Elegy 79, A Break from the Talent and All the Wrong People and others), musical theatre and classical performances, solos and duos and much more. The Parent Council will be providing refreshments for the event, with the Cabaret bar returning – wine, beer and non-alcoholic options will be available to purchase. This promises to be a great evening of music not to be missed – you can get your tickets on Parent Pay (£6 adult / £3 concession).

See you at the Town Hall!



 **PORTOBELLO**
HIGH SCHOOL

PHS MUSIC DEPT PRESENTS:

CABARET CONCERT

FEATURING POP, ROCK,
MUSICAL THEATRE & MORE!

7PM
THURSDAY
5TH NOVEMBER 2026
PORTOBELLO TOWN HALL

TICKETS £6/£3
AVAILABLE ON PARENT PAY

Refreshments available courtesy of
the Parent Council

PORTOBELLO
150
EST. 1876

Key dates 2026/27

Event	Day/Date
Parent Forum	Tue 29 th Sep
Senior Awards Ceremony	Thu 8 th October
All Finish - Non-uniform day	Fri 9 th October
Pupils resume	Tue 20 th October
Senior Phase Reports issued	Wed 28 th October
S4-6 Prelim Navigator programme launch (exam support for senior pupils)	Tue 3 rd Nov
S4 Parents Evening	Tue 3rd November
Cabaret Concert/Art Exhibition	Thu 5 th November
S1-3 Report issued	Tue 24 th November
Parent Forum	Wed 25 th Nov
S1 Parents Evening	Thu 26th November
S4 Prelims	1st-16 th Dec
S5/6 Parents Evening	Thu 10th December
All Finish - Non-uniform day	Friday 18 th Dec
Pupils resume	Wed 6 th Jan
S5/6 Prelims	7 th -20 th Jan
Senior Phase Report 2(S4)	Wed 13 th Jan
Parent Forum	Mon 25 th Jan

Event	Day/Date
Senior Phase report (S5/6 issued	Fri 5 th Feb
S4-6 Exam Navigator programme launch	Mon 8 th Feb
All Finish - Non-uniform day	Fri 12 th Feb
All resume	Mon 22 nd Feb
S3 Parents Evening	Wed 3rd March
S2 Parents Evening	Thu 11th March
Senior Phase report issued	Fri 19 th March
All Finish	Thu 25 th March
All Resume	Tue 30 th March
All Finish	Fri 2 nd April
All Resume	Tue 20 th April
Qualifications Scotland Exams	tbc
Holiday	Mon 3 rd & Tue 4 th May Pupils resume - 5 th May
S1-3 report issued	7 th May
Holiday	Mon 24 th May
New Timetable (S1-3)	Tue 25 th May
New Timetable (S4/5)	Mon 31 st May
All Finish	Tue 29 th June